



Free/Reduced Process Refresher

Indiana Department of
Education
May 2016



Agenda

- Tips and Best Practices:
 - End of the Year
 - Direct Certification
 - Free/Reduced Applications
 - Verification for Cause
 - Verification
 - Direct Verification
 - Verification Summary Report

Explore Our Website!

- Visit www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/school-nutrition-programs

School Nutrition Programs

Posted: Thu, 08/25/2011 – 2:46pm Updated: Thu, 04/09/2015 – 10:23am



Program Updates

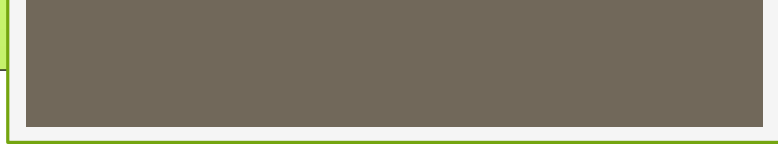
- Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act
 - [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act: Implementation Plan](#)
 - [New Nutrition Standards for School Meals](#)

School Nutrition Programs

- [Professional Standards \(NEW!\)](#)
- [National School Lunch Program](#)
- [National School Breakfast Program](#)
- [After School Snack Program](#)
- [Residential Childcare Institutions \(RCCIs\)](#)
- [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#)
- [Special Milk](#)

Requirements

- [Administrative Review Information](#)
- [Calendar of Due Dates](#) (revised March 2015)
- [Civil Rights](#)
- [Edit Checks](#)
- [Food Safety \(Formerly HACCP\)](#)
- [Free and Reduced Information](#)
- [On-Site Review](#)
- [Pricing and Reimbursement Rates](#)
- [Procurement](#) (Food Service Management Company Contracts, Food Purchases, etc.)
- [Smart Snacks](#)
- [Special Dietary Needs](#)
- [Verification](#)
- [Wellness Policies](#)

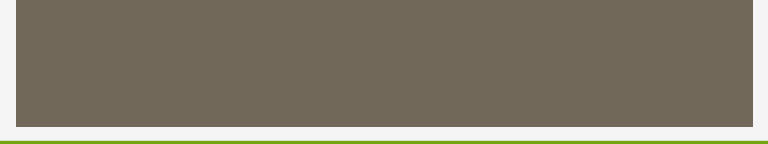


End of Year Reminders



End of the Year

- Make sure your 2015-16 files are organized.
- Create a list of non-responding households from the 15-16 Verification Process.
- Determine what type of Verification Process you must undergo in 16-17.

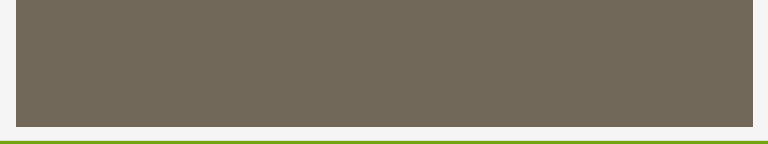


First Steps in PY 2017



Prepare Your Applications

- Download the F/R Application, Parent Letter/Instructions, and Notification Letters
- Review updated paperwork
- Edit the templates with your school's information.
- Do not distribute applications until July 1st!



Direct Certification



Direct Certification Tips

- Users must have a log in and password – obtain this from your school's STN administrator
- Conduct Direct Certification a minimum of 3 times during the school year:
 - Before applications are distributed
 - Before verification is conducted
 - Sometime after the second semester begins
- Once matched, approved for the rest of the year



Direct Certification & Verification

Eligibility: 03/2016

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Help

School Year 2015 - 2016

Direct Certification

Direct Certification is a technique or process for determining student eligibility for free school meals automatically through data exchange with the SNAP/Food Stamp Program, the TANF Program, and Foster Child Data. When a student is Directly Certified, the student's family need not complete the traditional application for Free Student Meals. This saves parents and school administrators time, and provides a uniform and efficient method for eligibility determinations.

In today's Child Nutrition Programs, there are other advantages for effectively utilizing Direct Certification, the most important being the new Community Eligibility Program. Schools are strongly encouraged to utilize Direct Certification as early as possible in the summer, preceding the start of school. Students should be Directly Certified prior to the distribution of applications if possible. USDA Regulations require that Direct Certification be completed at a minimum of three times a year.

The Indiana Department of Education strongly encourages and facilitates the use of these methods continually throughout the school year.

Online Resources

Direct Certification

[Quick Start Direct Certification for 2015/2016](#)

[Direct Certification Data Layouts](#)

<https://scndcdv.doe.in.gov/>



Eligibility: 03/2016

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Section 3 - Direct and Categorical Certification

Students approved as FREE eligible NOT subject to verification	3-1 ALL SFAs must report Section 3 or check box 3-1 if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Check this box if you did not complete Direct Certification. Only RCCIs with no day students, NonBase year Provision 2/3, or CEP schools are not required to complete DC.		(B) Number of Free Students
	3-2	Report only Students Direct Certified because of SNAP (Food Stamps). These may be identified in column U as "F" (for Food Stamps) on your school's STN Match Report. According to the STN Database, your program should be reporting at least 444 students Direct Certified because of SNAP. This number might be higher if a Direct Certified student lives in a household with other students not originally found on the STN Match Report.	467
	3-3	Other students Directly Certified due to TANF, Foster, or those counted as homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, Head Start, Pre-K Even Start. To identify TANF students on the STN Match Report they will be labeled with an "A" in column U. Foster students are labeled with a "W" in column U of the Match Report. Everyone else will be identified by direct contact with a school liaison or agency.	15
	3-4	Students approved for free meals due to household turning in an official SNAP (Food Stamp) letter from the SNAP agency.	0

NI	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	GLN
	NAME_SU	BIRTH	SCHL_STR	ICES_STRE	SCHL_CITY	ICES_CITY	SCHL_STA	SCHL_ZIP	SCHL_SSN	CASE	ASSISTAN	MATCH_T	CERTDATE	GRADE	
		8/27/2014		1000 S 1st St	St Louis	St Louis					A	H	7/31/2014	PK	
		8/27/2014		1000 S 1st St	St Louis	St Louis					A	H	7/31/2014	7	
		8/27/2014		1000 S 1st St	St Louis	St Louis					A	H	8/31/2014	6	
		8/27/2014		1000 S 1st St	St Louis	St Louis					F	H	1/31/2015	KG	
		8/27/2014		1000 S 1st St	St Louis	St Louis					F	H	2/28/2015	2	
		8/27/2014		1000 S 1st St	St Louis	St Louis					F	H	2/28/2015	1	
		8/27/2014		1000 S 1st St	St Louis	St Louis					F	H	3/31/2015	5	



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I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W
MIDDLE_N	MIDINI	NAME_SU	BIRTH	SCHL_STR	ICES_STRE	SCHL_CITY	ICES_CITY	SCHL_STA	SCHL_ZIP	SCHL_SSN	CASE	ASSISTAN	MATCH_T	CERTDATE
001	1.		6/7/2008		000000000000000000	000000000000000000	000000000000000000				000000000000000000	A	H	7/31/201
002	1.		000000000000000000		000000000000000000	000000000000000000	000000000000000000				000000000000000000	A	H	7/31/201
003	00		000000000000000000		000000000000000000	000000000000000000	000000000000000000				000000000000000000	A	H	8/31/201
004	00		6/7/2008		000000000000000000	000000000000000000	000000000000000000				000000000000000000	F	H	1/31/201
005	00		000000000000000000		000000000000000000	000000000000000000	000000000000000000				000000000000000000	F	H	2/28/201
006	1.		000000000000000000		000000000000000000	000000000000000000	000000000000000000				000000000000000000	F	H	2/28/201
007	00		000000000000000000		000000000000000000	000000000000000000	000000000000000000				000000000000000000	F	H	3/31/201

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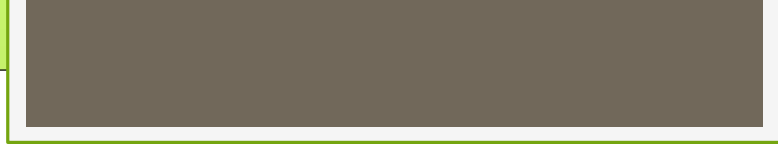
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Direct Certification Tips

- Save all organized DC matches and look-ups on your computer
- During a review we need to access your downloaded STN files



Processing Applications



Important!

- ISBOA requires schools to have procedures in place to double check (randomly) the work of all their employees, including those who approve applications.
- NO one person should have complete control over benefit assignments.
- Make sure there is a segregation of duties.



Changes to Application Process

- Applications must be organized at District Level
 - No longer processed at school level
 - Limited copying of applications
 - Field Consultant must review original application



Processing Applications

- Cross check apps with your direct certification list
- Process applications within 10 operating days
 - Effective Date Waiver
- 30 Day Carryover ends when new application is processed



Categorical Applications

- Food Stamp/TANF
 - 10 digits, beginning with a 10
 - If they indicate this is anything other than Food Stamp/TANF, ask for income information
 - Check with DC List
 - Conduct DC Lookup
 - If cannot find through DC, approve based on face value and flag to verify for cause



Categorical Applications

- Foster
 - Conduct DC Lookup
 - If no match can be made call the household to see if the child actually is a foster child
 - If cannot determine foster status, advise household to complete income section of application
 - If the household indicates the student is a ward of the State, then approve the application based on face value – this can still be verified

Direct Certification Look Up

- STN Database – Direct Certification - Lookup
- Enter the least amount of information

Direct Certification Eligibility LookUp

Student Information

First:

Last:

D.O.B.:

County:

Guardian Information

First:

Last:

Case#:

  Search



Direct Certification

Search Date: 5/11/2016

Child Information

Name: [REDACTED]

SSN: ***-**-****

D.O.B.: [REDACTED]

Guardian Information

Name: [REDACTED]

Case #: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Eligibility

Direct
Certification

Based on
program
participation
in month of:

06/2015

Eligible

Federal

Programs:

SNAP/Food Stamp-All other members of household can also be considered Directly Certified.

Print

Close



Categorical Applications

- Migrant, Runaway, Homeless
 - Eligibility must be validated before approved:
 - Letter from Homeless/Migrant Agency
 - Letter from school's Homeless/Migrant Liaison.
 - Letter must include child's name, the date determined homeless, runaway, or migrant, and the liaison's signature
 - Maintain on file
 - This should be updated every year



Income Application

- If an application has a case number and income recorded, process using the case number.
- Check that the application is complete
- No annual income allowed
- Only convert to annual income if multiple pay frequencies.
- Flag Error Prone applications *



No Income Application

- The free/reduced application allows households to leave any fields blank to indicate they have no income to report.
- If a household leaves all income fields blank – approve based on face value and verify for cause.
- Ask how are they meeting their bills?
Where are they living?



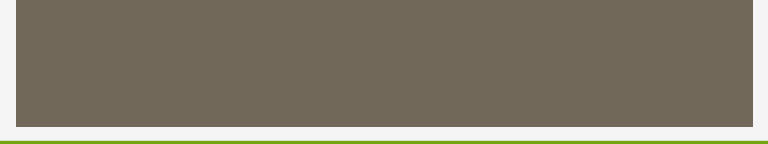
School Employee Application

- If the application appears to be complete, approve based on face value.
- If the salary information shows a misrepresentation of income on the application, verify for cause.
- Always talk with your school lawyer to determine the best way to handle questionable school employee applications.
- SP 13-2012



Confidentiality/Disclosure

- Sharing eligibility information
 - Only the household that applied
 - Programs under the National School Lunch Act or Child Nutrition Act
 - Programs that have obtained parent/guardian approval for disclosure



Verification for Cause



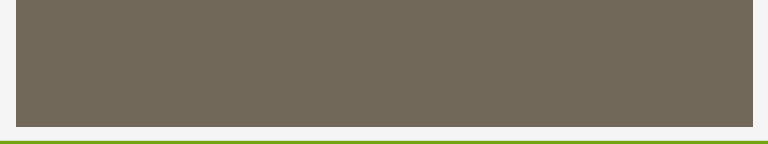
Flagging Suspicious Apps

- Last year's non responders reapplying
- Food Stamp/TANF number not identified in DC
- No income indicated on the application
- Questionable school employee application

Verification for Cause

- Can be conducted any point during the school year.
- Follow normal verification process.
- Send home a letter requesting verification documentation.
- Keep track for Verification Summary Report.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Date	Name	# Students	Original Elig.	Final Elig.		
2	8/4/2015	Hudson	3	Free - Categorical	Paid (non-response)		
3	8/4/2015	Smith	5	Reduced	Reduced (no change)		
4	9/17/2015	Washington	1	Free - Income	Paid (non-response)		
5	9/27/2015	Lowe	2	Free - Income	Reduced		



Verification Process



Issue 1: Not pulling the right # of applications

- If you use a software or manually count the applications- be sure your system is counting the total number of approved applications on file as of October 1st.
- Always round up!



Issue 2: Not completing the correct verification process

- Schools with high non-response rate must conduct Standard (Error Prone)
- All other schools can choose:
 - Standard (Error Prone)
 - Alternate One (Random)
 - Alternate Two (Focused)



Standard - Error Prone Verification

- Find 3%– round up!
 - $301 * 3\% = 9.03$ – 10 Error Prone apps to verify
- Pull that number from your error-prone apps that were flagged at the beginning of the year.



Alternate 1 - Random

- If you are not required to conduct Standard-Error Prone verification, this is an easy verification process to implement.
- Find 3%– round up!
 - $301 * 3\% = 9.03$ – 10 random apps to verify



Alternate 2 – Focused Sample

- Schools can choose to do this, but often do this wrong.
- Find 1% and .5% from that number – round up!
 - $301 * 1\% = 3.01$ – 4 error prone apps to verify
 - $301 * .5\% = 1.505$ – 2 categorical apps to verify



Issue 3: Not completing the Confirmation Review

- Confirmation reviews are required for schools that manually process applications or those that have software systems that cannot confirm they are 100% accurate.
- Someone other than the person processing the application is required to review the application to make sure it was approved correctly in the first place.
- They must sign off on this.

Issue 4: Schools do not use Direct Verification

- Takes place in the STN Database
- If one student can be Direct Verified, Verification is complete for the whole application.
- You can Direct Verify any type of application, not just Food Stamp/TANF applications.

Direct Verification

Search Date: 5/11/2015

Child Information

Name: **CHLOE MARCOLE B** SSN: *****
D.O.B.: **01/01/2007**

Guardian Information

Name: **CHRISTOPHER B** SSN: *****
Case #: **00000000000000000000**
Address: **800 CAMPBELL ST. HOUSTON, TX 77030**

Eligibility

Reference Id: **102382978999** Matching Record Found In: 05/2014

Eligible

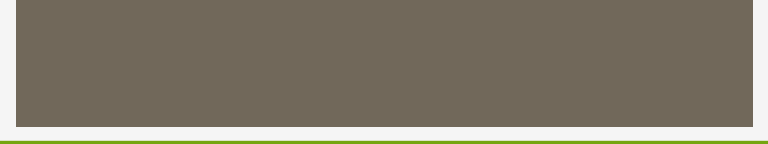
Federal
Programs:

Verified for Free



Issue 5: Not sticking to the Verification Due Date

- Stick to your due date.
- If a household does not respond by that due date, they are considered non-responders.
- Send notification letter stating in 10 calendar days their status will change to paid.
- If they respond within those 10 days, they will need to fill out a new application and provide documentation to back up their income information.
- If they don't respond and submit a new application, you must ask for verification documentation.



Verification Summary Report



Verification Summary Report

- Here is what you need to fill out your report:
 - Total number of DC students (including any students that were approved through Look Up or because a sibling was identified)
 - The number of free – categorical, free – income, and reduced applications on file with the number of students on those applications
 - The number of households verified for cause, the total number of students on those applications and the results after verification
 - The total number of households verified, the total number of students on those applications and the results after verification



Recordkeeping

- 3 years plus the current operating year:
 - Copy of F/R Application, Parent Letter, Instructions, Notification Letters
 - Direct Certification Lists and Look-Ups
 - Free/Reduced Applications
 - Approved, Denied, Withdrawn
 - Verification Documentation
 - Verification and Verification for Cause
 - Appeal Documentation



Questions?